

Ohio Scholastic Chess Association Tournament Guidelines

As of June 26, 2014

I. Introduction

1.1 The Ohio Chess Association (OCA) is the official state affiliate of the United States Chess Federation (USCF). OCA has designated the Ohio Scholastic Chess Association (OSCA) to be the official sanctioning body for scholastic state chess championship events in Ohio.

1.2 As authorized by Paragraph 4.3 of the OSCA Bylaws, the OSCA Board of Directors has adopted these guidelines with which all Ohio scholastic state championship tournaments shall comply. Organizers must obtain approval from the Board in advance to vary or depart from them.

II. General Tournament Conditions

2.1 Except as specified differently in these guidelines, tournaments shall be governed by the rules of chess currently in effect as set forth by the USCF.

Players

2.2 The OSCA bylaws establish certain player eligibility requirements which are repeated here for ease of reference:

- a) To participate in any championship section (not reserve), a player must be a resident of Ohio or enrolled in an Ohio school, and meet any other gender, age, grade, rating or other eligibility requirements that apply to the respective event.
- b) To represent a school on a team, a player must be enrolled more than half-time in the school, and the school must be a member of OSCA.

2.3 Players in rated sections must be current USCF members or purchase a USCF trial membership from the organizer in order to play in any rated section of a tournament. An exception is made by the USCF for any section restricted to players in grade 3 or lower under the Junior Tournament Player (JTP) Program.

2.4 Players may enter only those tournaments and sections designated for the grade in which they are enrolled in the current school year (ie, they may not “play up”). In the case of a home-school student, the grade shall be determined by the level of material they are studying in a majority of their subjects.

2.5 The organizer shall offer a reduced entry fee to players with financial need, and provide notice in advance publicity that “a limited number reduced entry fees are available to low-income families upon request” or similar wording to that effect.

- a) Verification of income shall not be required unless the organizer has reason to believe the player(s) in question are likely not from a low-income family.

- b) The reduced fee must be a discount of at least 50% of the early or late entry fee, as applicable.
- c) The organizer must make a number of discounts available equal to at least 5% of entries expected for the event, but is not required to award that many if not requested by players prior to entry.

2.6 Players who have registered for a tournament and did not request a bye but are not present at their assigned board at the start of each round one, will be assumed to have withdrawn from the tournament. The TD will manually re-pair the opponents of such withdrawn players at the beginning of round 1. Starting with the second round and for the remainder of the tournament, players who did not request a bye and do not appear at their assigned board before half of the time for the first time control has elapsed shall forfeit that game and be withdrawn from the tournament. Any player withdrawn from a tournament under either scenario may be readmitted to the tournament at the discretion of the chief TD. These policies shall be included in the tournament booklet or handout and in opening announcements.

2.7 A player who answers a cell phone call, sends a text message, or reads an incoming text message during a game shall immediately forfeit that game. A player whose cell phone or pager audibly rings during a game shall receive a warning for the first such incident, and forfeit the game upon a second such incident during the same tournament. The chief TD may use his or her discretion to remove a player from the remainder of the tournament for repeated violations of either rule. These policies shall be included in the tournament booklet or handout and in opening announcements.

Tournament Directors

2.8 The chief Tournament Director (TD) of each event must be certified by the USCF at the Senior level or above.

2.9 The minimum TD staff of each tournament shall be one certified TD to prepare pairings, plus one certified TD per 100 players or fraction thereof, counting all players in both rated and non-rated sections, and provided there shall be at least one certified TD per playing room. The chief TD may count toward any of these requirements.

2.10 Floor monitors or other volunteers who are not certified TDs shall not make rulings or discuss with players issues related to their games in progress. Organizers shall provide a means by which players and others can readily distinguish between certified TDs and non-certified volunteers.

Pairings

2.11 All events shall use Swiss System pairings. The TD may use variations or other systems if he/she determines there are too few entries in a section to make normal Swiss pairings desirable. Any departure from normal Swiss pairings shall be announced on site prior to play and used consistently throughout the tournament.

2.12 Accelerated pairings shall not be used in any rated section with fewer than 32 players in a 5-round tournament, or 64 players in a 6-round tournament. If the Chief TD determines accelerated pairings should be used in rated sections exceeding these minimums, only the

standard and added-score methods as described in USCF rule 28R1 shall be used. Advance publicity shall state accelerated pairings may be used.

2.13 The TD shall avoid pairing players together who are enrolled in the same school whenever possible, but shall not move players to other score groups solely to avoid pairing teammates.

Clocks

2.14 The use of clocks shall be standard in all sections of every tournament, whether rated or not. If either player provides one, consent of the opponent or TD shall not be required, but all USCF equipment rules apply (choice of clocks, defective clocks, etc.). Players unaccustomed to playing with clocks should be prepared to do so in the event an opponent or the TD provides one.

2.15 If the TD chooses to provide clocks at the outset for games where neither player provides one, he/she should follow a consistent policy of placing clocks on all games in a given section, the top so many boards in multiple sections, or some other consistent policy. Highest priority should generally be given to the uppermost section(s).

2.16 If neither player provides a clock and the TD does not provide one at the outset, the game shall be played without a clock. However, the TD has the option to place a clock on any such game near the end of the time allotted for that round, in order to bring the game to a timely end. In such cases, each player shall be given the same amount of remaining time, and no less than five minutes each.

2.17 Time controls in all events shall use a 5-second time delay. Non-delay clocks may be used, but delay clocks take priority. Clocks shall be set for the time control as announced; players using delay shall not deduct time from clocks, and players not using delay shall not add time.

Other Tournament Rules

2.18 The deadline set by the organizer for players to receive a reduced early entry fee (or to have a late entry fee imposed) may not be more than two weeks prior to the event date.

2.19 In sections restricted to grades 3 and below, and in all non-rated sections regardless of grade level, players shall be excused from the requirement to take notation. However, by not keeping notation, players may be ineligible to make certain claims which require a complete score sheet.

2.20 All tournaments shall use a variation of USCF rule 15A, allowing player to record their move before making it on the board unless they are using an electronic score-keeping device.

2.21 All tournaments shall allow one half-point bye (two in a tournament of six or more rounds) for any player upon request by the start of the second round, provided the player has not already received an assigned full-point bye. No half-point bye shall be available in the last round of a tournament.

Awards

2.22 Trophies shall be of a size and appearance commensurate with the honor of the state championship titles being awarded.

2.23 First place trophies awarded in each championship section (not reserve or non-rated) shall bear the designation “Ohio Champion” of the respective section. Other trophies shall indicate the place number of the award (2nd, 3rd, etc.), and shall be graduated in size through at least 5th place; remaining trophies may be of the same size if desired. Trophies awarded beyond 5th place in the Grade Level or Girls’ tournaments, or 10th place in other events, may be labeled “honorable mention” in lieu of a place number at the organizer’s option.

2.24 Other performance-based awards such as upset prizes, best under a certain rating, or other grade- or section-based awards shall be at the discretion of the organizer. Awards based on other criteria such as age, gender, time or distance traveled, geographic region, etc. are not permitted.

2.25 Participation medals or trophies may be awarded to all players at the organizer’s option.

2.26 Awards shall be of the same size and appearance as their counterparts in all championship sections of each event. Individual and team awards shall be of similar size and appearance within each section, except in the Team Championship event where team awards should be more prominent than individual awards.

2.27 All players or teams tied by score for a title, place award or other honor shall be co-winners of the distinction. Standard USCF tie-breaks shall be used to award trophies, selection as a state representative to another event, or other awards which cannot be divided or shared.

2.28 In order to win a team award at any state championship tournament, a school must be a member of OSCA, and must be represented by a minimum of two players enrolled in that school playing in the same section. Refer to the OSCA bylaws for details about how schools qualify for membership.

III. Tournament Descriptions

3.1 Ohio Grade Level State Championships

Preferred Date: The Saturday before Thanksgiving

Sections: 13, one each for grades K-12. No reserve or non-rated sections.

Format: 5-round, 1-day tournament.

Time Control: K-2: 5 rounds G/30

3-6: 4 rounds G/30, 5th round G/45

7-12: 4 rounds G/45, 5th round G/60

Awards: Trophies in each section to any player scoring 3.5 or higher. Trophies to top 3 teams in each section. Best 3 individual scores count for team score.

3.2 Ohio Elementary State Championships

Preferred Date: March or April

Sections: 3, Primary Championship (K-3), Elementary Championship (K-6), and Elementary Reserve (K-6/U-500). Organizers may offer additional non-rated sections if desired, and if so, must clearly define in advance publicity what restrictions, if any, apply to entries in such sections.

Format: 5-round, 1-day tournament.

Time Control: Championship sections: 4 rounds G/30, 5th round G/45. Reserve sections: 5 rounds G/30

Awards: Trophies in each section to any player scoring 3.5 or higher. Trophies to top 5 teams in each section. Best 4 individual scores count for team score.

Other: Players in grades K-6 are permitted to enter both the Elementary and Middle School Championships in the same year.

3.3 Ohio Middle School State Championship

Preferred Date: March or April, usually in conjunction with High School Championship

Sections: 2, Championship (K-8/Open), Reserve (K-8/U800). No non-rated sections.

Format: 6-round, 2-day tournament. 4 rounds on Saturday, 2 rounds on Sunday

Time Control: Championship: 3 rounds G/60, 3 rounds G/90. Reserve: 6 rounds G/60.

Awards: Trophies in each section to any player scoring 4.0 or higher. Trophies to top 5 teams in each section. Best 4 individual scores count for team score.

Other: Players in grades K-6 are permitted to enter both the Elementary and Middle School Championships in the same year.

3.4 Ohio High School State Championship

Preferred Date: March or April, usually in conjunction with Middle School Championship

Sections: 2, Championship (9-12/Open), Reserve (9-12/U1000). No non-rated sections.

Format: 6-round, 2-day tournament. 4 rounds on Saturday, 2 rounds on Sunday

Time Control: Championship: 3 rounds G/60, 3 rounds G/90. Reserve: 6 rounds G/60.

Awards: Trophies in each section to any player scoring 4.0 or higher. Trophies to top 5 teams in each section. Best 4 individual scores count for team score.

Other: The highest scoring player (using tie breaks if needed) in the Championship section who accepts shall represent Ohio in the Denker National High School Championship (but see also paragraph 3.7).

3.5 Ohio Girls Scholastic State Championship

Preferred Date: Late February thru early May

Sections: 1 Championship section (K-12/Open). Organizers may offer additional rated or non-rated sections if desired, and if so, must clearly define in advance publicity what restrictions, if any, apply to entries in non-rated sections.

Format: 5-round, 1-day tournament.

Time Control: Championship: 4 rounds G/30, 5th round G/45. Other sections: at organizer's discretion.

Awards: Trophies in each section to any player scoring 3.5 or higher. Trophies to top 3 teams in each section. Best 3 individual scores count for team score.

Other: The highest scoring player (using tie breaks if needed) in the Championship section who accepts shall represent Ohio in the USCF National Girls Championship Tournament (but see also paragraph 3.7).

3.6 Ohio Team Scholastic State Championships

Preferred Date: Late October thru early May

Sections: 3 Championship sections: Elementary (K-6), Middle School (K-8), High School (K-12). 2 Reserve sections: Middle School (average rating of 4 top players below 800), High School (average rating of 4 top players below 1000 and none above 1200). No non-rated sections.

Format: 4-round, 1-day tournament. In sections with too few teams for appropriate pairings, all teams in that section must face each other at least once, but otherwise the section may be combined for pairing purposes (but not awards), Elementary with Middle School or Middle School with High School.

Time Control: Elementary G/45, Middle School and High School G/60. If Elementary and Middle School sections are combined (see **Format** above), the time control shall be whichever applies to the section with the most teams before being combined.

Awards: Trophies to the 5 top-scoring teams in each section. Trophy to the top-scoring individual player at each board position in each section. A player is eligible for a board prize at the lowest position played during the tournament.

Other: Each team shall consist of at least 4 and not more than 6 players from the same OSCA member school. Each round, the team will choose any 4 members to play 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th board in the order of their relative ratings in descending order, or if not rated, according to age. A school may enter more than one team, assigning members to each in any manner it wishes. Members shall not be changed from one team to another after registration ends. Extra rated games (which don't count toward tournament prizes) may be offered for the alternates not playing for their team each round, or for members of teams with a bye. Refer to USCF rules for other details regarding team tournament pairings, score, etc.

3.7 In any given year, a player may represent Ohio in either the Denker or the USCF National Girls Championship, but not both. In whichever state qualifying tournament is held first each year, a female champion must declare her choice of the national event in which she will represent Ohio should she win both state qualifying tournaments that same year.

IV. Organizers & Proposal Process

4.1 Parties interested in organizing a state championship shall submit a proposal in writing to the OSCA President. At a minimum, the proposal shall include the following information:

- The organizer's name and contact information, and a description of experience organizing similar size events. If a group, include the lead organizer and key volunteers.
- Date of the tournament. Organizers should discuss potential dates with the designated USCF clearing house for Ohio prior to submitting a proposal. Include a description of any conflicts that exist or were avoided with other national or significant state chess tournaments, major religious holidays, or SAT/ACT test dates (not applicable to the Elementary or Middle School tournaments).
- Name and address of the tournament site, which the organizer must secure prior to the proposal. Also include general driving directions or a general description of the location, such as area of town, distance to nearest city, access to major highways, etc.
- General description of facilities available for tournament play, waiting/skittles area, parking, food service, team rooms, recreation, etc.
- Name and certification level (Senior or above) of the Chief TD, who must commit prior to the proposal.
- Names (or number, if not yet committed) of other certified TDs who will assist with the tournament.
- Source and quantity of boards, sets and clocks to be secured for the tournament.
- Schedule of events during and related to the tournament, including a description of any proposed side events or other activities.
- Structure and general description of awards

- Names or types of vendors to appear at the tournament (optional but encouraged)
- Complete schedule of entry fees, discounts, late fees, team room fees, etc., as well registration deadlines.
- Plans for promotion of the tournament. At least one TLA must appear in *Chess Life*, preferably two or three.
- Statement by the person who is accepting responsibility, that the tournament will be conducted according to all OSCA and USCF requirements.
- Any variations from these guidelines which the organizer proposes for the tournament.

4.2 Either with the proposal or shortly after its acceptance, the organizer shall submit for Board review a draft of the flyer advertising the tournament, and the entry form to be used. Flyers or websites shall refer players and coaches to these guidelines so they may be informed of the various rules and conditions they may expect, and prepare accordingly. The Board must approve the final version of these documents before distribution to the public.

4.3 Upon acceptance of a proposal, the organizer shall arrange for a group rate at one or more hotels convenient to the playing site, and announce the appropriate details in advance publicity.

4.4 Organizers are encouraged to use creativity to offer facilities, activities and amenities which will enhance the enjoyment of the players, parents, coaches and tournament staff at each event.

4.5 Prospective organizers should consult with the chief TD, other experienced organizers, and/or the OSCA President in all aspects of the tournament plans concerning facilities, players, sections, schedule and format of the event when designing a proposal and advance publicity.

4.6 The Board may exercise its sole discretion to accept or decline any proposal for an event, to decline all proposals, to solicit additional proposals even if others have already been submitted, or to organize a tournament on its own behalf.

4.7 The preferred deadline for submission of proposals for each tournament is as follows:

- March 31 of the prior school year for Grade Level, Girls and Team
- September 30 of the current school year for Elementary, Middle School and High School

4.8 The organizer of each event shall be solely responsible for the finances of that event, bearing any loss and enjoying any profit. The organizer of each event shall remit to the OSCA Treasurer a tournament fee of \$1 per registered player (including non-rated sections, if any), up to a maximum for each event as follows:

- Grade Level, \$450
- Elementary, \$250
- Middle School, \$125
- High School, \$125
- Girls, \$100
- Team, \$100

V. Modifications of Guidelines

5.1 The Board may modify these event guidelines from time to time. Organizers, TDs, coaches, parents and players should ensure they are referring to the most recent version before hosting, directing or entering any event.